

## Rise in obesity among soldiers reported

By PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

American soldiers piled on the pounds during the pandemic, with about three-quarters of the roughly 192,000 active-duty subjects analyzed in a newly published study deemed overweight or obese during a nine-month stretch.

The findings suggest that the Army faced “significant public health and readiness concerns” as a result of having greater numbers of soldiers who were too heavy, authors of a report published Tuesday in the scientific journal BMC Public Health said.

The retrospective study used data from the Military Health System Data Repository. Body mass index was calculated for a period from February 2019 to January 2020 and another from September 2020 to June 2021, giving researchers time frames before the onset of COVID-19 and during the pandemic, respectively.

“Based on the results from this study and the literature, increases in BMI among Ar-

my soldiers are likely to continue unless there is intervention,” the report said.

Nearly 74% of the soldiers whose data was examined in the study were found to have an unhealthy BMI during the latter time span, a jump from about 68% in the pre-pandemic period.

Among those, over 23% were classified as obese during the pandemic, up from 18% before the coronavirus began to spread globally, the data showed.

The largest changes in BMI occurred in junior enlisted soldiers between the ages of 20 and 24. These troops often live in barracks, attend organized physical training and get their meals at dining facilities on base.

The authors of the report highlighted the strict body fat standards soldiers must maintain to be considered fit for duty.

BMI is the most used method by the Army to estimate body fat. The number of soldiers considered overweight or obese was already rising before the pandemic, accord-

ing to the study.

But in March 2020, Army leaders restricted movements and activities to stop the spread of the virus at installations, likely making it tougher for troops to engage in healthy behavior, the authors said.

However, they stressed that the data cannot be used to establish what actually might have caused the weight gain.

Metrics such as waist circumference, skinfold measurements and body fat percentages — which can be misleading for overly muscular individuals, such as military personnel — were not included in the study, which was based solely on BMI.

“Future research into targeted measures to prevent obesity among soldiers during future public health emergencies is needed, especially in times of lockdown and social distancing measures,” the study concluded.

It added that further analysis of the effects of post-pandemic obesity on fitness levels would help to highlight the importance this issue has for the military.

## North Korea confirms custody of runaway US soldier

By DAVID CHOI  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — North Korea said Wednesday that a U.S. soldier “admitted that he illegally intruded” into the country and claimed he had been mistreated by the Army and racially discriminated against while serving.

“He also expressed his willingness to seek refuge in [North Korea] or a third country, saying that he was disillusioned at the unequal American society,” the state-run Korean Central News Agency report states.

It was North Korea’s first acknowledgement that it has custody of Army Pvt. Travis King, 23, who is Black. North Korea apprehended King after he

dashed into the country during a group tour of the heavily guarded Joint Security Area on July 18, according to KCNA.

The U.S. Defense Department in an email to Stars and Stripes on Wednesday said it was not able to “verify these alleged comments” in KCNA’s report.

“We remain focused on his safe return,” an unnamed Defense Department spokesperson wrote. “The Department’s priority is to bring Private King home, and we are working through all available channels to achieve that outcome.”

An official with U.N. Command last month confirmed that talks with North Korea for King’s release have taken place but released few details about his status, citing the ongoing

negotiations.

“The primary concern for us is Pvt. King’s welfare,” deputy commander British Lt. Gen. Andrew Harrison said during a press briefing July 24.

King was part of a U.N. Command-sponsored tour at the security area along the heavily fortified Demilitarized Zone, roughly 30 miles north of Seoul, on the day of his escape. The Joint Security area is the site where U.N. Command and North Korean delegates negotiated the end of the three-year Korean War. Those negotiations resulted in an armistice agreement, rather than a peace treaty.

King, a cavalry scout, was released from a South Korean prison on July 10 after spending six weeks there for assault

charges.

South Korean court records indicate King pleaded guilty to an assault charge in Seoul. King refused to answer questions from police responding to an assault Oct. 8. He kicked the door of a squad car and yelled obscenities toward the police, records state.

Days after his release, King was booked on a flight to Fort Bliss, Texas, where he was supposed to face disciplinary hearings from the Army. King did not board the flight from Incheon International Airport and instead made his way to Seoul, roughly 30 miles away, where he attended a pre-scheduled tour of the Demilitarized Zone, according to military reports reviewed by online news site The Messenger.

# China appears to be making island airstrip

Associated Press

BEIJING — China appears to be constructing an airstrip on a disputed South China Sea island that is also claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan, according to satellite photos analyzed by The Associated Press.

The work on Triton island in the Paracel group mirrors construction on seven human-made islands in the Spratly group to the east which have been equipped with airstrips, docks and military systems, although it currently appears to be somewhat more modest in scale.

China claims virtually the entire South China Sea as its own, denying the claims of others and defying an international ruling invalidating its assertion.

Satellite photos from Planet Labs PBC analyzed by the AP show construction on the airstrip first visible in early August.

The runway, as currently laid out, would be more than 2,000 feet in length, long enough to accommodate turboprop aircraft

and drones, but not fighter jets or bombers.

Also visible are large numbers of vehicle tracks running across much of the island, along with what appear to be containers and construction equipment.

Triton is one of the major islands in the Paracel group, which is roughly equidistant from the coast of Vietnam and China's island province of Hainan.

The United States has taken no stance on the sovereignty claims, but regularly sends Navy ships on "freedom of navigation operations" near the Chinese-held islands. Triton was the focus of one of those missions in 2018.

China has had a small harbor and buildings on the island for years, along with a helipad and radar arrays.

China has refused to provide details of its island construction work other than to say it is aimed at helping global navigation safety.

# Russia pounds Ukrainian grain storage hubs again

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russian drones pounded grain storage facilities and ports along the Danube River that Ukraine has increasingly relied on as an alternative transport route to Europe, after Moscow broke off a key wartime shipping agreement using the Black Sea.

At the same time, a loaded container ship stranded at the Black Sea port of Odesa since Russia's full-scale invasion more than 17 months ago set sail along a temporary corridor established by Ukraine for merchant shipping.

Ukraine's economy, crunched by the war, is heavily dependent on farming. Its agricultural exports, like those of Russia, are also crucial for world supplies of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and other food that developing nations rely on.

A month ago, the Kremlin tore up an agreement brokered last summer by the United Nations and Turkey to ensure safe Ukraine grain exports through the Black Sea.

Since then, Kyiv has sought to reroute transport through the

Danube and road and rail links into Europe. But transport costs that way are much higher, some European countries have balked at the consequences for local grain prices and the Danube ports can't handle the same volume as seaports.

Odesa Gov. Oleh Kiper said the primary targets of Russia's overnight drone bombardment were port terminals and grain silos, including at the ports in the Danube delta.

Air defenses managed to intercept 13 drones over Odesa and Mykolaiv regions, according to the Ukraine Air Force's morning update.

It was the latest attack amid weeks of aerial strikes as Russia has targeted the Danube delta ports, which are only about 10 miles from the Romanian border. The Danube is Europe's second-longest river and a key transport route.

Meanwhile, the container ship departing Odesa was the first vessel to set sail since July 16, according to Oleksandr Kubrakov, Ukraine's deputy prime minister. It had been stuck in Odesa since February 2022.

# UN envoy says Taliban should be prosecuted

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — The International Criminal Court should prosecute Taliban leaders for a crime against humanity for denying education and employment to Afghan girls and women, the U.N. special envoy for global education said.

Gordon Brown told a virtual U.N. press conference on the second anniversary of the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan on Tuesday that its rulers are responsible for "the most egregious, vicious and indefensible

violation of women's rights and girls' rights in the world today."

The former British prime minister said he has sent a legal opinion to ICC prosecutor Karim Khan which shows the denial of education and employment is "gender discrimination, which should count as a crime against humanity, and it should be prosecuted by the International Criminal Court."

The Taliban took power in August 2021, during the final weeks of the U.S. and NATO forces' pullout after 20 years of

war. As they did during their previous rule of Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, the Taliban gradually reimposed their harsh interpretation of Islamic law, or Sharia, barring girls from school beyond the sixth grade and women from most jobs, public spaces and gyms and recently closing beauty salons.

Brown urged major Muslim countries to send a delegation of clerics to Afghanistan's southern city of Kandahar, the home of Taliban supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada, to

make the case that bans on women's education and employment have "no basis in the Quran or the Islamic religion" — and to lift them.

The Taliban's chief spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, brushed aside questions about restrictions on girls and women in an Associated Press interview late Monday in Kabul, saying the status quo will remain. He also said the Taliban view their rule of Afghanistan as open-ended, drawing legitimacy from Islamic law and facing no significant threat.

# Maui power, cell service not fully restored

Associated Press

LAHAINA, Hawaii — Survivors of deadly wildfires on Maui contended with intermittent power and unreliable cell service as they sought help rebuilding their lives. Teams of people, meanwhile, labored to find the dead and identify them.

With the death toll already at 106, a mobile morgue unit with additional coroners arrived in Hawaii on Tuesday to help with the grim task of sorting through remains. The governor warned that a new storm could complicate the search and recovery.

A week after a wildfire all but incinerated the historic town of Lahaina, communication on the island was still difficult. Some people walked periodically to a seawall, where phone connections were strongest, to make calls. Flying low off the coast, a single-prop airplane used a loud-

speaker to blare information about where to get water and supplies.

Thousands of people are staying in shelters, in hotel rooms and Airbnb units, or with friends. Around 2,000 homes and businesses still don't have electricity, Maui County wrote Tuesday night, after the power company restored supply to over 10,000 customers.

Victoria Martocci, who lost her scuba business and a boat, planned to travel to her storage unit Wednesday to stash documents and keepsakes given to her by a friend whose house burned.

"These are things she grabbed, the only things she could grab, and I want to keep them safe for her," Martocci said.

President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden plan to visit Maui next week and meet with survivors of the fires, as well as first re-

sponders and other government officials, the White House said Wednesday. Biden has pledged that "every asset they need will be there for them."

On Tuesday, the county released the names of two victims: Lahaina residents Robert Dyckman, 74, and Buddy Jantoc, 79. They are the first of five who have been identified so far.

Crews are rushing to secure remains, Gov. Josh Green said, ahead of possible storms forecast for the weekend.

Crews using cadaver dogs have scoured approximately 30% of the burn area, according to officials. The wildfires are already the deadliest in the U.S. in more than a century, and Green had previously warned that scores more bodies could be found.

"Many of the fatalities were on the road, down by the sea," Green told ABC's "Good Morning

America" on Wednesday. "So the numbers will increase, but they will not increase — we hope — to ... catastrophic proportions. We just don't know yet."

The governor added that officials are considering cutting off power during the storms as a precautionary measure.

The local power utility has faced criticism for leaving power on as strong winds from a passing hurricane buffeted a parched area last week, and one video shows a cable dangling in a charred patch of grass, surrounded by flames, in the early moments of the wildfire. Hawaiian Electric Co. Inc. President and CEO Shelee Kimura said many factors go into a decision to cut power, including the impact on people who rely on specialized medical equipment and concerns that a shutoff in the fire area would have knocked out water pumps.

## Pig kidney in donated body passes key test, doctor says

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Surgeons transplanted a pig's kidney into a brain-dead man and for over a month it's worked normally — a critical step toward an operation the New York team hopes to eventually try in living patients.

Scientists around the country are racing to learn how to use animal organs to save human lives, and bodies donated for research offer a remarkable rehearsal.

The latest experiment announced Wednesday by NYU Langone Health marks the longest a pig kidney has functioned in a person, albeit a deceased one — and it's not over. Researchers are set to track the kidney's performance for a second month.

"Is this organ really going to work like a human organ? So far it's looking like it is," Dr. Robert Montgomery, director of NYU Langone's transplant institute, told The Associated Press.

"It looks even better than a human kidney," Montgomery, the kidney transplant surgeon who also received his own heart transplant, said on July 14 as he replaced a deceased man's own kidneys with a single kidney from a genetically modified pig — and watched it immediately start producing urine.

It's the latest in a string of developments renewing hope for animal-to-human transplants, or xenotransplantation, after decades of failure as people's immune systems attacked the foreign tissue. This time pigs are being genetically modified so their organs better match human bodies.

The Food and Drug Administration is considering whether to allow some small but rigorous studies of pig heart or kidney transplants in volunteer patients.

More than 100,000 patients are on the nation's transplant list and thousands die each year waiting.

## Northern California fire roars near site of deadly 2022 blaze

Associated Press

HAMBURG, Calif. — A wildfire pushed by gusty winds from a thunderstorm raced through national forest land near California's border with Oregon, prompting evacuations in the rural area.

The blaze in Siskiyou County, dubbed the Head Fire, was one of at least 19 fires — most of them tiny — that erupted in the Klamath National Forest as thunderstorms rolling through the area brought lightning and downdrafts that drove the flames through timber and rural lands. Estimates late Tuesday placed the fire at 4.7 to 6.3 square miles in size.

Evacuation orders and warnings have been issued, forest supervisor Rachel Smith said in a statement on Facebook.

"If you are in this area, please get out immediately," she said.

In the space of a few hours, the blaze had grown and spot fires from the main blaze jumped the

Klamath River, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

The Happy Camp Division of the Happy Camp/Oak Knoll Ranger District has 11 total confirmed fires, ranging in size up to 50 acres, Smith said.

There weren't any immediate reports of injuries or homes burned Tuesday night. However, the Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office issued evacuation orders for several areas.

The Head Fire was burning near the site of the McKinney Fire, which began on July 29 of last year. That fire started in the Klamath National Forest and exploded in size when a thunderstorm created winds up to 50 mph. It reduced much of Klamath River, a scenic community of about 200 people, to ash and killed four people, including two who may have been trying to flee the flames. Their bodies were found inside a charred vehicle in the driveway of a home.



# McCarthy floats idea to avoid shutdown

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Congressional leaders are pitching a stopgap government funding package to avoid a federal shutdown after next month, acknowledging the House and Senate are nowhere near agreement on spending levels to keep federal operations running.

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy raised the idea of a months-long funding package, known as a continuing resolution, to House Republicans on a members-only call Monday evening, according to those familiar with the private session and granted anonymity to discuss it.

On Tuesday, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said the two leaders had spoken about such a temporary measure. It would extend federal funding operations into December to allow more time to work on the annual spending bills.

"I thought it was a good thing that he recognized that we need a CR," Schumer, D-N.Y., told reporters on a call.

"We hope that our House Republicans will realize that any funding resolution has to be bipartisan or they will risk shutting

down the government," he said.

A stopgap measure that would keep government offices running past the Sept. 30 end of the fiscal year is a typical strategy while the Republican-held House and Democrat-held Senate try to iron out a long-term budget agreement. The government's new fiscal year begins on Oct. 1, when funding approval is needed to avert closures of federal offices.

But this year, the task may prove more politically difficult. McCarthy will need to win over a large portion of his Republican colleagues to pass the stopgap bill or risk political blowback from staunch conservatives if he leaves them behind and cuts a bipartisan deal with Democrats.

Conservatives, including many from the House Freedom Caucus, are usually loath to get behind short-term funding measures as they push for steeper spending cuts, using the threat of a shutdown as leverage.

Foretelling the political dynamics ahead, many in Congress are bracing for a shutdown.

"It's clear President [Joe] Biden and Speaker McCarthy want a government

shutdown, so that's what Congress will do after we return in September. Everyone should plan accordingly," Republican Rep. Tony Gonzales posted on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, shortly after the Monday Republican call.

Democrats alongside Biden don't necessarily want a shutdown, but they would be quick to blame Republicans for instigating it — arguing that Republicans are the ones driving for spending reductions.

All sides had agreed to budget levels during the recent debt ceiling negotiations when Biden and McCarthy struck a deal that established topline spending levels. But McCarthy's GOP majority rejects those amounts.

White House deputy press secretary Olivia Dalton was asked Tuesday on Air Force One if Biden is worried about a government shutdown.

"We worked in good faith to negotiate a bipartisan budget agreement a couple of months ago," Dalton said.

"We've upheld our end of the bargain. They've upheld theirs, so far. We can expect that to continue."

## NC lawmakers seek to revive trans measures

*AP/Report for America*

RALEIGH, N.C. — Transgender rights take center stage in North Carolina again Wednesday as GOP supermajorities in the General Assembly attempt to override the governor's vetoes of legislation banning gender-affirming health care for minors and limiting transgender participation in school sports.

The state House will hold the first of two votes Wednesday afternoon in a bid to enact the bills over Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper's opposition. If House Republicans quickly muster the votes needed, the Senate

might aim to complete the override with a decisive final vote Wednesday evening, the Senate leader's office said.

The GOP holds veto-proof majorities in both chambers for the first time since 2018, affording Republicans a clear path to consider certain LGBTQ+ restrictions that had not previously gained traction in North Carolina. Initial votes indicate Cooper's vetoes of both bills are likely to be overridden.

If the Republicans who control the General Assembly are successful, North Carolina would become the 22nd state to enact legislation restricting or banning gender-

affirming medical care for trans minors — though many of those laws are facing court challenges.

The North Carolina bill would bar medical professionals from providing hormone therapy, puberty-blocking drugs and surgical gender-transition procedures to anyone under 18, with limited medical exceptions. If the bill is overridden, the legislation would take effect immediately, though minors who had started treatment before Aug. 1 could continue receiving that care if their doctors deem it medically necessary and their parents consent.

## Prosecutors in Hunter Biden case: Deal is dead

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — A legal showdown over the derailed plea deal for Hunter Biden continued Tuesday as prosecutors asserted that an agreement on a gun charge is dead along with the rest of the deal as the case makes a major shift into a spe-

cial counsel investigation.

While the agreement that was supposed to have wrapped up the long-running investigation of President Joe Biden's son largely unraveled during a contentious court hearing last month, prosecutors said the two sides had continued to negotiate until

the defense rejected their final counterproposal the day before U.S. Attorney David Weiss asked to be named special counsel.

Lawyers for Hunter Biden have argued that prosecutors reneged on an agreement on tax charges but said a separate

agreement sparing him prosecution on a gun charge remains valid. The agreement on the gun charge also contains an immunity clause against federal prosecutions for some other potential crimes.

Prosecutors denied reneging on any deal.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### 13 injured when airboats crash, officials say

**FL** KENANSVILLE — A crash involving two airboats in central Florida sent 13 people to the hospital on Monday, officials said.

The airboats, operated by Wild Florida, crashed on Cypress Lake in Kenansville, about 50 miles south of Orlando, the Orlando Sentinel reported.

Officials said a total of 28 passengers were involved, with 13 being taken to area hospitals. The extent of their injuries wasn't immediately reported.

The Osceola County Sheriff's Office and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission responded to the crash. The U.S. Coast Guard will investigate.

### Video shows lawmaker berating police officers

**TX** DALLAS — Police video released Monday shows Rep. Ronny Jackson, R-Texas, being taken to the ground by officers, profanely berating them and threatening to report them to the governor during an altercation at a rodeo last month.

In body camera video, the retired U.S. Navy rear admiral and former White House physician can be seen approaching a group of people surrounding a 15-year-old girl who authorities have said was having seizures. The two-term Republican congressman later has what looks like an argument with one of the people attending to the teenager before she is put on a stretcher.

Shortly afterward, Jackson is wrestled to the ground by at least two officers. The 31-minute video shows officers turning

Jackson facedown and putting him in handcuffs before helping him to his feet.

"I'm going to call the governor tomorrow and I'm going to talk to him about this (expletive), because this is (expletive) ridiculous," Jackson can later be heard telling a state trooper, his voice raised.

State police released the video footage days after Jackson defended his actions in a post on social media.

### Young environmental activists prevail in trial

**MT** HELENA — Young environmental activists scored what experts described as a groundbreaking legal victory Monday when a Montana judge said state agencies were violating their constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment by allowing fossil fuel development.

The ruling in this first-of-its-kind trial in the U.S. adds to a small number of legal decisions around the world that have established a government duty to protect citizens from climate change.

District Court Judge Kathy Seeley found the policy the state uses in evaluating requests for fossil fuel permits—which does not allow agencies to look at greenhouse gas emissions—is unconstitutional.

It marks the first time a U.S. court has ruled against a government for violating a constitutional right based on climate change, said Harvard Law School Professor Richard Lazarus.

However, it's up to the Montana Legislature to determine how to bring the state's policies into compliance. That leaves

slim chances for prompt changes in a fossil fuel-friendly state where Republicans dominate the statehouse.

### AP course won't count toward graduation credit

**AR** LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas education officials on Monday said an Advanced Placement course on African American studies won't count toward a student's graduation credit, prompting criticism from Black lawmakers who said the move sends the wrong message.

The Arkansas Department of Education didn't bar schools from offering the course, as Florida did earlier this year when it told the College Board it violated state law. The department said the class, which is offered at a handful of schools in Arkansas, could still count toward students' grade point averages.

But the Education Department said the class couldn't be part of the state's advanced placement course offerings since it's still a pilot program and hasn't been vetted by the state yet. The department cited a state law enacted this year that places restrictions on how race is taught in school but did not say the course violates those prohibitions.

### Inmate arrested after 'security incident'

**AL** BESSEMER — An Alabama inmate who appeared on social media videos with what appeared to be a handgun, while describing the prison as a deadly "war zone," was arrested for what the prison system called a security incident at the lock-up.

The Alabama Department of Corrections said Derrol Shaw, 35, was arrested and will be charged in connection with a "security incident" early Sunday morning at Donaldson Correctional Facility in Bessemer. No prison staff were injured, the prison system said.

Videos circulating on social media purported to show Shaw, wearing what appeared to be an officer's vest and holding what appeared to be a gun. He likened prison conditions to a war zone, saying they were both deadly and chaotic.

"They killing us. They create the conditions so that we die all the time," Shaw said.

Al.com reported that Shaw is being charged with escape, illegal possession of a firearm, promoting prison contraband and making a terrorist threat.

### Crash scatters propane bottles across highway

**MS** POPLARVILLE — A semitrailer hauling propane bottles crashed and caught fire Monday, blocking traffic for several hours along Interstate 59 in southern Mississippi.

The danger caused by exploding propane bottles forced the Mississippi Highway Patrol to block traffic in both directions near Poplarville. The driver of the truck was able to escape, highway patrol said.

Photos posted on social media by the highway patrol showed propane bottles strewn across the interstate and the incinerated remains of the truck. Responders were working to contain the fire, which spread to trees along the interstate.

— From wire reports

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# Sumo wrestler learns DL for Colorado State

*Associated Press*

FORT COLLINS, Colo. — The newest Colorado State defensive lineman was recently called upon to lead his teammates in a series of pre-practice stretches.

Hidetora Hanada showed off some flexibility-testing poses straight out of a sumo wrestling handbook, including deep squats that had some players grimacing.

Just a tiny glimpse into why he's a sumo grand champion.

Back in Japan, the 6-foot-1, 280-pound Hanada rose to the highest amateur ranks of sumo wrestling by refusing to be pushed around in the ring. He's taking that same approach to the football field as he learns the ropes of being a run stuffer/pass rusher for the Rams.

Swapping his mawashi — the traditional loincloth sumo wrestlers wear — for shoulder pads and a helmet, the 21-year-old has quickly adjusted to life in the foothills of Fort Collins, about an hour's drive north of Denver. His English has come a long way (learned in eight

months), he knows the basic rules of football (offsides is bad) and is picking up some valuable "kimarite" (finishing moves). He's also discovered a love of lasagna.

"While competing sumo in Japan, I started thinking that I wanted to fight many strong athletes worldwide. Football is the most popular sport in the United States, and I wanted to see how I can compete in that environment," Hanada explained through a translator. "I wanted to see my limit. That's why I decided to challenge football."

In July, Hanada wrote on social media that he was attending Colorado State to play football. The news made a splash in Japan, where sumo wrestling is largely viewed as the national sport. He was on track to becoming a rare professional Yokozuna, which is the highest rank a sumo wrestler can achieve inside the dohyo (ring).

He was already an amateur Yokozuna, in addition to earning gold at the 2022 World Games in the heavyweight division.

"Changing my focus to football might have disappointed some, but I'd like to prove to them that I'm challenging something new and (will be) successful at it on the global stage," said Hanada, whose team starts out at home against Washington State on Sept. 2. "I'm thinking of each one of them all the time while pushing myself to the new challenge every day."

The object in sumo wrestling remains straightforward: Win by either pushing an opponent out of the ring or by forcing them to the ground. The object in American football for a defensive lineman isn't all that much different — keep low and bring the opponent to the turf.

Hanada was working out with a semi-pro football team in Japan called the IBM Big Blue, when he met Mike Phair, the defensive line coach for Ottawa of the Canadian Football League. Phair was asked by Big Blue team supervisor Shinzo Yamada last spring to venture over to Japan to work with Hanada and other defensive linemen.

It didn't take Phair long to see his potential.

"Just the power and the leverage and strength," Phair said. "His skillset, I was really impressed."

Hanada attended a CFL combine in Edmonton, where his strength from sumo wrestling allowed him to stand out. He bench-pressed and bull-rushed his way into the minds of everyone watching. And while the CFL would have to wait, Phair helped find him a college home.

He already had the perfect person in mind — Buddha Williams, the defensive line coach at Colorado State. Phair grew tight with Williams from their days together at Illinois.

"Buddha's a heck of a coach and a heck of a teacher," Phair said. "I knew Buddha would spend time with him."

Williams has, too.

"You see tremendous strides every day," Williams said. "He continues to get better playing with unbelievable pad level, playing a lot faster. The game for him is starting to slow down."

# Colts name Richardson starting QB for opener

*Associated Press*

WESTFIELD, Ind. — Anthony Richardson's first NFL start convinced the Indianapolis Colts that he's ready to keep the job.

On Tuesday, three days after the fourth overall draft pick made his pro debut at Buffalo, coach Shane Steichen ended the suspense by naming Richardson the Colts' opening day starter.

Richardson's regular-season debut, on Sept. 10 against Jacksonville, will mark the seventh straight year Indy has had a different Week 1 starter. It began when Scott Tolzien replaced the injured Andrew Luck in 2017. The Colts are hoping Richardson's ascent to the No. 1 spot on the depth chart ends the revolving door.

"I just started working my tail off every day," Richardson said. "I didn't want to come here and make it seem like everything was handed to me because it definitely shouldn't be."

When the Colts reported to training camp on July 25, general manager Chris Ballard insisted the team wouldn't rush Richardson onto the field. Instead, Indy wanted to make sure the rookie was ready to play.

Richardson opened camp splitting first-team snaps with veteran Gardner Minshew but worked most of last week with the starters. Minshew signed with Indy as a free agent during the offseason.

On Thursday, Steichen told reporters Richardson would start the preseason opener as the competition continued. But after reviewing Saturday's footage, Steichen informed Richardson and Minshew of his decision Monday night.

Richardson was 7-for-12 with 67 yards and one interception — on his third pass attempt — against the Bills, who didn't play many starters. The 6-foot-4, 244-pound former Florida star also had two carries for 7

yards, though his longest run of the day was called back on a holding call.

Richardson was considered one of the draft's most intriguing prospects.

He dazzled scouts with a strong arm at the NFL's annual scouting combine and some described Richardson's overall performance as the most athletic they'd ever seen by a quarterback.

Still, some questioned his readiness to play immediately after he completed just 54.7% of his throws while going 6-7 as the Gators' starter. And once Richardson got to Indy, he needed to learn the playbook and earn the respect of coaches and teammates.

Mission accomplished.

"He's a good leader. I think he's getting comfortable and getting to know him, he's a humble dude," safety Julian Blackmon said. "I'm just excited to see what he can do — he can do everything — it's just in terms of what plays he makes."



# Hemp helps England reach first ever final

Associated Press

SYDNEY — Lauren Hemp didn't let the Women's World Cup semifinal between Australia and England become the Sam Kerr show.

Hemp scored to restore England's lead and then provided a perfect pass for the clincher as the Lionesses moved into their first World Cup championship game with a 3-1 victory Wednesday over Australia.

The semifinal outcome ended the Matildas' captivating run through the tournament that Australia is co-hosting with New Zealand, and it ensured England will get a chance to bring a World Cup home for the first time since 1966 when the Lionesses meet Spain on Sunday.

Sarina Wiegman became the first coach to lead two countries to the Women's World Cup final, and in back-to-back tournaments. Her run with the Netherlands in 2019 ended with a loss to the United States in the championship decider.

On either side of that, she guided Netherlands to the European title in 2017 and then took over the England squad for its breakthrough Euro 2022 title.

"I'm the lucky one — the last

two tournaments I'm going to the final," said Wiegman, the only female head coach of any team to reach the quarterfinals. The equation is now one out of two.

"You make it to finals, it's really special," she said. "I'm like, 'Am I here in the middle of a fairy tale or something?'"

England dominated possession in the first half, starving the Australians of the ball and shutting down the Matildas' transitional, counter-attacking game.

It was rewarded when Ella Toone scored in the 36th minute with a powerful right-foot shot diagonally inside the far post. A throw-in from Rachel Daly went to Hemp, who turned and sent it into the area where Alessia Russo turned it back past Hemp for Toone to swoop.

Australia superstar Kerr started her first match of the tournament after overcoming a left calf injury and scored for the Matildas, but it wasn't enough to overhaul the European champions.

Her equalizer in the 63rd gave the 75,784-strong crowd some hope, but Hemp scored to restore England's lead in the 71st and provided a perfect

through ball for Alessia Russo to finish from a tight angle on the right side four minutes from the end of regulation.

"Even after Sam's goal, there was no fear in the squad. We weren't nervous. We just played our football," Hemp said. "I think we showed the relentlessness inside the squad to make it 2-1. And then even when we're on the back foot there going into the final few minutes, I felt like we showed calm, composure on the ball to manage to counterattack them and obviously make it 3-1."

England and Spain will each be playing in the Women's World Cup final for the first time when they meet at Stadium Australia on Sunday. It will be the first all-European final since 2003.

Australia will play Sweden for third place on Saturday in Brisbane.

"We wanted to dominate the game. We didn't do that. And we wanted to probably create more scoring opportunities and we didn't do that," Australia midfielder Katrina Gorry said.

England was playing in the semifinals for the third consecutive Women's World Cup. Australia was in the final four for the first time.

It showed, particularly in the first half and in the last 20 minutes when the Australians had to chase the game.

England had a harder edge and was more clinical when it counted.

Kerr went on as a second-half substitute in that narrow win over fifth-ranked France and the 29-year-old Matildas captain finally started a game — her team's sixth of the tournament — against England.

She ended up on the ground after her first touch after a tangle with Keira Walsh. In the 9th minute, England defender Alex Greenwood received a yellow card for a sliding tackle from behind that left Kerr on the ground again.

After being subdued by England's defense in the first half, Kerr made a big entrance with an equalizer just after the hour. Kerr took the ball at midfield, moved upfield in a solo run and wrong-footed a defender before launching a right-foot shot from outside that lightly touched defender Mille Bright before going into the top left corner.

Kerr started making inroads but England responded quickly, with Hemp running onto a long ball into the area and scoring with a left-foot finish.

# Messi scores again, Inter Miami advances to final

Associated Press

CHESTER, Pa. — Lionel Messi keeps scoring goals, and Inter Miami keeps winning games.

Messi ripped a shot from 30 yards past three Philadelphia defenders in the 20th minute that made fans who paid a record price for soccer tickets in the Philly area rejoice, and Inter Miami beat the Union 4-1 in a Leagues Cup semifinal on Tuesday night.

Major League Soccer is Messi's league now.

Messi exchanged jerseys with

fellow Argentinian and Union forward Julián Carranza, then skipped out on the traditional postgame interview and instead saved his message for his 483 million Instagram followers.

"We worked our way to the finals and we made it!!! We're still on the last step," he wrote.

The seven-time Ballon d'Or winner scored his ninth goal in six matches with his new team in front of a crowd that pushed 20,000 fans, with ticket prices soaring past \$1,000 on the secondary market.

There were few complaints.

Certainly not from three Union season ticket holders who ditched the home team's garb for a night and traded it for Messi gear. Or fans that lined up for Messi jerseys — authenticity not guaranteed — and the ones at a food truck for Messi fries.

And certainly not from the Union, who, of course wanted to win, but otherwise stuffed the coffers and received more worldwide attention on one night than in any game they've played in their history.

Fans erupted when the 36-year-old Messi was introduced

and went wild again when he scored past diving goalkeeper Andre Blake. Messi ran with his arms extended and then punched his fist in the air as he leapt in celebration.

The rest was almost incidental.

Jordi Alba and Josef Martinez also scored in the first half for Miami, and David Ruiz scored in the second. Miami will play in the Leagues Cup championship game Saturday against Nashville, which beat Mexican club Monterrey 2-0 later Tuesday night.

# Ozuna's blast helps Braves down Yanks

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Bryce Elder and Marcell Ozuna never lost faith in themselves.

It's sure paying off.

Bouncing back from a rough stretch, Elder pitched seven innings to lead a one-hitter, getting all the run support he needed when Ozuna hit a three-run homer in the first to lead the Atlanta Braves past the reeling New York Yankees 5-0.

Ronald Acuña Jr. also went deep for the Braves, who have outscored the Yankees 16-3 over the first two games of the series.

"I'm not going to sit up here and say I was always confident," said Elder, a first-time All-Star this season but just 1-3 with a 7.94 ERA over his previous six starts. "You just have to say, 'Forget it. I'm just going to go back to trying to make one pitch at a time.' Whatever the result is, I can live with it."

He certainly had no complaints after this one.

DJ LeMahieu singled to center in the second for the lone

New York hit, a season-low for the Yankees. He was erased on one of four double plays his team hit into — three of them against Elder, who faced just one batter above the minimum.

Elder walked three and struck out three while throwing 94 pitches. A.J. Minter and Kirby Yates finished with a hitless inning apiece for the Braves' 12th shutout this season.

**Dodgers 6, Brewers 2:** Rookie Bobby Miller (7-2) tossed six innings of one-run ball and host Los Angeles won its ninth straight game, beating Milwaukee in a matchup of division leaders.

**Rangers 7, Angels 3:** Corey Seager hit two homers and drove in five runs as AL West-leading Texas beat visiting Los Angeles.

**White Sox 5, Cubs 3:** Luis Robert Jr. hit a tiebreaking solo homer in his return to the lineup, and the White Sox beat the crosstown Cubs at Wrigley Field.

**Guardians 3, Reds 0:** Rookie

Logan Allen (6-5) allowed four hits in six innings, Kole Calhoun hit a two-run single in the first and visiting Cleveland won consecutive games for the first time in three weeks.

**Blue Jays 2, Phillies 1:** Cavan Biggio was hit in the foot by a pitch from Seranthony Dominguez (2-3) with the bases loaded in the eighth inning to force in the tiebreaking run, and host Toronto beat Philadelphia.

**Astros 6, Marlins 5:** Kyle Tucker hit a tiebreaking homer in the seventh inning and visiting Houston rallied past Miami.

**Red Sox 5, Nationals 4:** Alex Verdugo led off the game with a homer and visiting Boston beat Washington.

**Twins 5, Tigers 3:** Matt Wallner hit a grand slam to cap a five-run sixth inning and host Minnesota beat Detroit.

**Padres 10, Orioles 3:** Gary Sánchez hit a grand slam in a five-run first inning and Manny Machado added a two-run double in the second against struggling Jack Flaherty (8-8) to help

host San Diego beat AL-leading Baltimore.

**Giants 7, Rays 0:** Thairo Estrada homered with one out in the sixth to break up a scoreless game, Wilmer Flores hit a two-run drive three batters later, and host San Francisco blanked Tampa Bay.

**Mariners 10, Royals 8 (10):** Ty France lined a two-run single to center off Tucker Davidson (1-2) in the 10th inning and visiting Seattle rebounded from a blown seven-run lead to beat Kansas City.

**Pirates 7, Mets 4:** Jason Delany hit a two-run double in a six-run seventh inning and visiting Pittsburgh beat New York.

**Diamondbacks 8, Rockies 5:** Ketel Marte had a two-run single and Tommy Pham hit a go-ahead double in a five-run ninth inning, and visiting Arizona beat Colorado.

**Cardinals 6, Athletics 2:** Nolan Arenado and Jordan Walker homered in the first inning against Spencer Watkins (0-1) and host St. Louis beat Oakland.

## Little League World Series hosts first team from Cuba

Associated Press

SOUTH WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. — Little League has been hosting its World Series in Williamsport since 1947, yet it will be welcoming a new guest when the tournament starts Wednesday: Cuba.

Bayamo Little League beat Habana del Este Little League 6-2 to become the first Cuban team to qualify for the tournament back in March.

And the club from Bayamo sure is happy to have made it. Walking into a Little League-sponsored picnic Monday at a college across the Susquehanna River, the Cubans entered with a player draped in the Cuban flag, the only team to carry one to the event. They played their first game Wednesday against Japan.

"We are very proud to be here representing Cuba," manager Vladimir Vargas said through a translator. "We have many teams that want to be here, and we are the ones. It is an awesome thing for us."

It hasn't been an easy feat to make it to Williamsport both on and off the field for the Cubans.

Little League expanded from 16 teams to 20 teams in 2022, part of which meant adding Puerto Rico, Panama and Cuba in a rotation where each region gets an automatic berth for a team in the tournament two out of every three years. In the third year, they compete to make the LLWS in their larger region. This year, the top Cuban team was a lock to make the tournament.

While Cold War tensions kept

Cuba out of the LLWS for decades, when Little League officials reached out more recently, the Cubans responded by bringing about 700 teams under the banner of Little League.

Still, even with Havana and Miami just 228 miles apart, this is the first time the Cuban players and coaches have set foot on U.S. soil.

"We are very proud to be here," Cuba's team captain, Edgar Torrez, said through a translator. "This is a good experience for us. The best moment so far was just seeing the field that we are going to get to play on."

The Cubans don't have an easy task in their first appearance, taking on Japan, which was the last international team to win it all in 2017. The Japanese also have won the tourna-

ment five times since 2010, about the closest thing to a dynasty the LLWS has had in that time.

"We have seen a couple videos of their games, but Japan is always a tough team," Vargas said. "We are going to play the way we did in Cuba — to win."

The winner of the Cuba-Japan game moves on to face Mexico, which has an opening-round bye. The loser drops into the elimination bracket.

Mexico made it to the semifinals on the international side of the bracket last year but was beaten by Curacao, which in turn lost 13-3 to Hawaii in the final.

The Cubans, meanwhile, will get some added motivation by getting to play in front of their families in South Williamsport.